

## **Economic Sustainability Committee Meeting Notes**

Attendees: Mayor Pam Hemminger, Council Member George Cianciolo, Council Member Jessica Anderson, Council Member Michael Parker, Council Member Ed Harrison, Dwight Bassett, Mary Jane Nirdlinger, Ben Hitchings, Rae Buckley, Gene Poveromo, Meg McGurk, Steve Brantley, Gordon Merklein, Jeanne Brown, Catherine Lazorko, Fred Lampe

8 to 10 a.m. Friday, May 6 – Chapel Hill Public Library, Room C

### **Update on Downtown 2020 Strategy**

Rae Buckley provided a Draft Downtown 2020 Work Plan that will be reviewed by the Council on June 27 (after review by the Planning Commission on May 17). The Work Plan -- reviewed by several boards, committees and commissions as well as interested community groups and individual stakeholders -- transforms ideas into actions that will be undertaken by Town staff and partners between now and the year 2020. Also presented was the 2020 Downtown Strategy, a summary document providing an overview to create a more diverse downtown that engages residents, students, visitors and workers. The Strategy is a summary of priorities and ideas for downtown.

Rae opened the presentation with an overview about Chapel Hill's distinctive character and qualities. The concept of "Placemaking – First Life, Then Spaces, Then Buildings" was shared.

Meg McGurk then discussed successes and opportunities in Downtown Chapel Hill. Work has been ongoing to create active public gathering spaces and make sidewalks a better place to sit and socialize. Some successes include infrastructure improvements to expand sidewalk spaces, 140 West Plaza events, Pop-up Farmer's Markets, Movies under the Stars, "parklet" events, Gorilla Gardening, Windows of Chapel Hill, Shimmer: The Art of Light, street performers, murals, pop-up retail, and the Bike Parade Night.

Committee discussed need for additional wayfinding signage, parking initiatives and activating green space.

Question: Is the Town overregulating or "getting in the way" of progress for Downtown?

### **Presentation on Proposed Sign Ordinance**

Gene Poveromo discussed the Proposed Sign Ordinance, which is scheduled for review by the Planning Commission (May 17), Public Hearing (May 16), and Council (June 27). The ordinance has been essentially unchanged in 25 years except for minor changes to commercial center signs (2011) and some commercial signage changes (2013). These changes have been largely welcomed by the community.

The proposed revisions address that Chapel Hill is becoming a more urbanized community. For example, new regulations permit "crown signs" for the top of tall buildings.

Question: Can we permit "feather signs"?

Question: Can we offer an incentive to make character-signs and really cool signs? Example: BARCADE

### **Update on Previously Recommended Goals**

Mary Jane Nirdlinger provided a follow-up on the committee's request to explore a process for creating a new zone that would allow new types of spaces and rezone the Millhouse property for light-industrial/research companies. A public hearing could be planned for fall 2016. Consider naming the proposed zone "Office Research Manufacturing." Orange County has developed this term for a similar proposed new zone.

Question: Can we hear from OWASA about the implications of light manufacturing and other uses in this area?

Question: Can we get informed responses from the business community about whether this will achieve our goals?

Question: How do we get broad community input?

Question: Are there things we don't want for this zone that we should spell out?

### **Update on Previously Recommended Goals**

Dwight Bassett discussed the joint Incentive policy with Orange County. Staff is researching similar policies established by cities of Charlotte, Greensboro and Raleigh. The Town Council and Board of County Commissioners will jointly meet on June 2, and this will be a good opportunity to share ideas about the proposal.

Question: How would sales tax dollars be used? How would we set aside funds?

## Event Calendar

### Council Committee on Economic Sustainability

**Date:** 05/06/2016 8:00 AM - 9:59 AM

**Location:** Chapel Hill Library, Rm C  
100 Library Drive  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514

**Introduction:**

PROPOSED AGENDA

### Council Economic Sustainability Committee

**May 6, 2016**

**8:00am – Chapel Hill Public Library, Rm C**

AGENDA:

**VISION:** Taking our place on the map as a world class center for research and development.

**MISSION:** Support opportunities to put Chapel Hill’s people to work, and create economic prosperity for all, now and in the future.

**1. Goals**

1. Update on Downtown 2020 Strategy – Rae Buckley (To support Economic Sustainability.)
2. Presentation on proposed Sign Ordinance – Gene Poveromo (To support Economic Sustainability.)
3. Up-date on previously recommended goals: Discuss rezoning Millhouse Road area for light-industrial/research companies - ask manager to propose process for initiating rezoning. Creation of a zone to accommodate.
4. Update on previously recommended goals: a) -Consider joint Incentive Policy with Orange County- ask county and town managers to develop thoughts for consideration

**2. Next Steps**

**Future Agenda:**

Goal:	Related to:	When:
Joint Incentives	Business recruitment/Retention	June
Incent Office Dev.	Recruitment and Jobs	June
Overall Work Plan	Taking our Place on the Map	June
Definitions	Work Plan	June